

Appendix on the Byzantine-Slavic Rite

By Fr. Eulampius (Stanislav) Tyshkevich SJ

1. The Catholic Church desires that her children, originally from countries where Eastern ecclesiastical and liturgical order has existed since ancient times, preserve this order inviolably.
2. The Church desires and demands this because it best accords with
 - a. her Catholic, universal spirit of preserving all that is healthy and holy,
 - b. her respect for Church Tradition, both Western and Eastern,
 - c. her maternal concern to facilitate the path to salvation for all, following the example of Christ.
3. Catholicism does not "hide behind the guise of the Orthodox rite." In the Eastern rite, the Catholic Church, through loud mention of the Pope in services and sermons, openly proclaims that her children of the Byzantine-Slavic rite are Catholics. However, everyone everywhere knows perfectly well where the Catholic Eastern churches are and where they are not. The Byzantine-Slavic Rite is an Orthodox rite in the sense that it pertains to the one "right," that is, the Catholic Church. If, however, by the word "Orthodoxy" we mean Eastern Christianity's deviation from union with the Bishop of Rome, then the Byzantine-Slavic Catholic Rite is not and cannot be "Orthodox."
4. This rite was developed long before the Greek Schism by Catholic saints, including Basil the Great and John Chrysostom, and has always existed in the Eastern church communities that remained with Rome. In the Eastern churches that fell away, it remained as a relic of Catholicism, a precious legacy of the Catholic Churches that once flourished so much in the East.

5. Catholicism of the Byzantine-Slavic Rite is not a "ruse to deceive" Eastern Christians. If there were an unworthy trick here, then we would have to blasphemously accuse our Savior Himself of a similar deception—for Christ, for the sake of salvation, became human "flesh" and, throughout His Gospel, adapted Himself to the customs of the land in which He lived.
6. Catholics of the Byzantine Slavonic Rite are not semi-Catholics, not "second-class" Catholics. They are as fully members of the one Church of Christ as Latin Catholics, no more, no less.
7. Catholicism of the Byzantine Slavonic Rite is not some kind of "transitional stage" preparing the way for the integration of all Eastern Catholics into the Latin Rite. For the Catholic Church, out of supernatural motives and out of love for her Eastern children, cannot desire the diminution of their spiritual treasures. And even if any pope wanted to be guided by earthly motives and calculations, why would he alienate Eastern Christians by imposing upon them the Latin Rite, which is incomprehensible to them? If today's Eastern Rite Catholicism can be called a "transitional stage," it is only in the sense that the Catholic Church strives gradually, in keeping with the general development of Eastern Catholicism, to adopt for its Russian children everything required by the sound traditions of Eastern church life, such as canonical principles, the patriarchate, forms of asceticism, a special way of theological thought defined by the teachings of the Eastern Church Fathers, and so on. Only everything incompatible with God's natural laws and Revelation, everything detrimental to true Orthodoxy, such as divorce, is excluded. The fundamental principle of Catholicism is not "uniformity," but, on the contrary, "unity in diversity."

8. Some object: But doesn't the Catholic clergy force Byzantine-Slavic Catholics to embrace Latinism, to accept Latin dogmas about the Holy Spirit, the Immaculate Conception, and so on? We answer: Dogmas are an area of faith where there can be no distinction between East and West, between the Latin and Eastern spirits. There is only one truth everywhere, and Catholics who reject any Catholic dogmas are no longer Catholics.

9. These dogmas were proclaimed in the West, but the place of proclamation is irrelevant here; truth is not bound by place or time. This is true even with respect to truths of a lower order: mathematical truths are not Spanish or Australian. It is even more absurd to speak of Greek or Latin faith. Faith can only be either true, divine, and saving, or false and erroneous.

10. If the teachings on the Holy Spirit or the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, finally defined as dogmas by the Pope in Rome, must be called Latin, then all the dogmas of the ancient ecumenical councils recognized in the independent Russian Church must also be called Latin, for they acquired the significance of universal Church dogmas only after the final recognition of their truth by the Pope of Rome, whose primacy was recognized at that time by the Eastern Churches as well.

11. The Byzantine-Slavic Rite, like the Latin Rite, is salvific insofar as it is connected with the one saving faith of the true Church of Christ. It is not the rite as such that saves, but submission to the will of Christ regarding doctrine and ecclesiastical order; the will of Christ the Savior is that His Church be one.

12. The relationship between Catholics of the Byzantine-Slavic Rite and Catholics of other rites must be fraternal and loving. We are all children of the same Mother, the Catholic Church, and despite the differences in rites, we form one spiritual family, one ecclesial

community. Therefore, it is sinful to shun representatives of other rites, to become arrogant, to think only of the interests of one's own rite, to strive to create a separate national Church through ritual peculiarities, etc.

13. The best means of preserving the Catholic spirit of communion between different rites is the Most Holy Eucharist. Before the loving Savior present in the Eucharist, all ritual barriers must disappear. Let Catholics of one rite occasionally receive Communion in churches of another rite. A sincere, childlike veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary is also essential for a healthy spiritual life in general, and in particular for maintaining Catholic fraternal love among Catholics of various rites.

14. With respect to Christians of the Eastern Rite who reject the Catholic Church, Catholics of the Eastern Rite, like all Catholics in general, have, among other duties, the following:

- a. to see them as brothers, called by grace to the unity of the Church of Christ, and therefore to love them with the pure love of Christ;
- b. to respect their sincerity and integrity;
- c. to exhort them to a pious life based on purely religious motives and in accordance with the authentic Orthodox traditions of the Eastern Fathers of the Church;
- d. To point out to them that the most vicious atheists and enemies of Orthodoxy seek nothing more than to alienate all Christians from the Roman Apostolic See, and therefore one must beware of the slander being spread everywhere against the papacy;

e. To pray fervently and sacrificially for these Christians, especially for those who, unknowingly, blaspheme the Catholic Church.